

From: Chuck Davis [mailto:cdocean@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 05, 2006 10:48 PM
To: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
Cc: yscuba@californiadivers.com; marc@livingseaimages.com; LWillo1124@aol.com
Subject: MLPAComments: Please Support Package 2

Dear DFG/MLPA Decision Makers:

As the final decisions are being made to implement the Marine Life Protection Act, here in Central California, I am writing to you today to ask that you please give our coastal waters the best protection you can -- the door is open and the time is now -- we need a system of reserves and marine protected areas which will serve ALL stakeholders in the *long term*, whether consumptive or non-consumptive: Please support **Package 2** when you implement the final boundary lines for our Central Coast. Package 2 will not only provide a more effective network of marine reserves, but I believe it will also serve the Central Coast's marine economic and eco-tourism needs better as well.

I have been following the MLPA activities very closely for the past few years and have reviewed the current options which are outlined on your website: (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/centralcoast.html#maps>). In my opinion, Package 2 is the best and most effective option if the State is truly going to foster marine life *protection* along our Central Coast: In my opinion the alternative Package "S" is simply a compromise to a compromise and is falls short for several reasons, but here are just a few of the important ones:

1) From what I have garnered after carefully reviewing your website, Package S's protections along the Pacific Grove shore (on paper at least) will basically give *less* protection to this area than it already has, ignoring the wishes of residents and many visitors to this community for more protections of its tidelands and the Pacific Grove Marine Gardens Fish Refuge. The December 2005 Packages 2 and 3 both *banned* spearfishing CONTESTS (but not spearfishing) off Pacific Grove (and also Carmel Bay Marine Conservation Areas), *but* Package S *allows* all recreational fishing, *including* contests in these two heavily-dived SMCAs.

2) Package S will basically obliterate the long-standing non-consumptive movement for Ricketts Reserve from the Breakwater to Lovers' Point. Ricketts is an extremely important eco-tourism area and one of the most important shore diving sites in America -- if Package S is adopted, Ricketts will simply be reduced to a "paper park" and will not benefit from the enhanced marine environment afforded by a marine reserve: An enhanced marine environment not only benefits the marine ecosystem, but translates into eco-tourism dollars for local hotels, dive shops, restaurants, etc.

3) Package S's Carmel Pinnacles Reserve is too small to achieve social and economic benefit to divers and the Monterey-area dive industry.

In closing, I should point out that I make my living as a professional underwater photographer and cinematographer and spend a great deal of underwater time each year off our Central Coast, in particular within Monterey Bay and neighboring Carmel Bay. Over the past twelve years or so, it has saddened me to witness firsthand how the "baseline" for what I once knew as a more healthy and vibrant kelp forest ecosystem has slowly withered to a lesser form of itself -- it's certainly not doomsday by any means, but it is very hard these days to find a mature rockfish at places like Chase Reef off Pacific Grove -- not impossible, just very difficult. I think this says something about the health of our nearshore waters. The idea that Package S might prevail is a nightmarish thought to me -- if this were to occur, that would mean folks like myself who live in Pacific Grove would wake up one morning when the MLPA process was finally completed only to discover that after all the hard work and sweat and toil of

so many, that we would have *less* protections for our local marine environment than we had when we started...and the "baseline" would just keep slipping downward. Surely we can do better. Please-- support Package 2 and help push the "baseline" back up where it should be.

Sincerely,

Chuck Davis
Pacific Grove